

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on Monday 16th September 2019 at 7:00 pm In the Old Magistrates Court, Guildhall, Abingdon

Present:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Cllr Margaret Crick | Chair |
| Cllr Grace Clifton | Vice Chair |
| Cllr Charlie Birks | Ex-officio - Mayor |
| Cllr Samantha Bowring | Ex-officio – Chair F&GP Committee, Leader |

In Attendance

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Mrs Jo Blackmore | Clerk to the Meeting |
| Cllr Jim Halliday | |
| Mr Nigel Warner | Town Clerk |
| Mr Ian Wiper | The Abbey Cinema |
| Mrs Sue Wiper | The Abbey Cinema |

G26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cheryl Briggs and Neil Fawcett.

G27 Declarations of Interest

None.

G28 Minutes

Members received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee of 19th August 2019.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee of 19th August 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

G29 Matters arising

None.

G30 Public participation

None.

G31 **Financial report**

Members received and considered the financial report of the Treasurer and Responsible Financial Officer.

Resolved: that the financial report of the Treasurer and Responsible Financial Officer be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

G32 **The Guildhall and the Abbey Cinema**

Ian and Sue Wiper entered the meeting at this point, it being 7:20pm.

The Chair, Cllr Margaret Crick, introduced Sue and Ian Wiper of the Regal Cinema, Evesham. It was noted that the Regal leased the Abbey Hall from the Council for the operation of the Abbey Cinema and also managed and operated the Guildhall on behalf of the Council.

Mr and Mrs Wiper made a presentation and updated the Committee regarding the management of the Guildhall. The presentation included a report relating to Guildhall bookings, their forecast for 2020/21, a report on the Downton Abbey premiere and fundraiser, details of the open weekend 21st to 22nd September 2019. They detailed outstanding issues which included audio-visual facilities, use of the Old Magistrates Court and accessibility proposals, including a lift in the Foyer area. They also requested that the Council consider installing a bar facility in the Roysse Room Foyer.

These matters were discussed with the Committee.

The Chair, Cllr Margaret Crick, thanked Mr and Mrs Wiper for their presentation.

G33 **Guildhall Complex of buildings – property matters**

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to property matters, as circulated with the agenda.

Access and passenger lift

Mr and Mrs Wiper were requested to remain in the meeting and participate in an advisory capacity due to their roles in the Guildhall as detailed above; they did not participate in the decision- making in relation to this matter.

As reported at the previous meeting the passenger lift to the Abbey Hall was out of commission from mid-August 2019 until early September. This followed a breakdown of the lift which the cinema reported to be the only one since the opening of the cinema in December 2018.

There had now been a further technical inspection of the lift with additional training for staff in relation to passenger release. The view of the lift company was that although the lift is dated, it is in good working order. However ideally the door mechanism needed replacing, as opening the doors had been the problem when the lift had broken down in August. There was a substantial cost to this, detailed in the confidential report.

The Committee considered the possible ways forward.

There were a number of works which had been suggested in relation to the lift. This included replacement of the doors and the door mechanism so it could be more easily opened in an emergency. The lack of an autodialler was highlighted although it was understood that as the lift was an existing installation it was compliant without an autodialler. The cinema management also considered that their procedures were such that the facility was not required. Mr Wiper stated that staff were aware of who was using the lift at all times and it was always checked after the films ended. Finally, at present the lift cannot be used in a fire; the Committee considered modifying the lift so that it could be used for evacuation in a fire, as detailed in the confidential report.

In terms of the frequency of use of the passenger lift Mr Wiper stated that this varied but it was used regularly and its use was increasing. More people with mobility issues were coming to the cinema, particularly screenings such as dementia friendly shows.

In moving towards equal access and in the longer-term, the Committee considered that the best option would be to look at access options within or at the front of the building. One potential solution, proposed by Leys Longden Chartered Surveyors, had been considered at the meeting in May 2019 although the Leader, Cllr Samantha Bowring, reminded Members that at the subsequent Finance and General Purposes Committee Members decided that “this should not be high priority in the immediate future.”

Mr Wiper had an alternative proposal. This was that a new lift should be installed outside the entrance to the cinema and the entrance area extended. The lift would serve the Abbey Hall/ cinema and bar area. Access to the Abbey Room would be achieved by extending the “pigeon alley corridor” through the current cupboard and into the bar. There would then only be a few steps required to reach the Council Chamber. Mr Wiper felt that money would be better put towards this rather than works to the existing passenger lift and that customers would be content with the current situation knowing that we were working towards a good long-term solution. From his knowledge Mr Wiper estimated that the cost of this new lift would be less than £100,000. Members were informed that any new lift would meet all current regulations and that it being designated as an evacuation lift would also be considered.

The Committee considered re-instating the platform/ chairlift from the Abbey Hall reception to the Abbey Hall, which had been decommissioned approximately six years ago. A quote had been received and was detailed in the confidential report.

The advantages and disadvantages of a platform/ chairlift were discussed. In terms of the disadvantages it could be considered inelegant/ undignified for the users. It would reduce the width of the stairs from the lobby to the hall and adversely affect the look of that area. However it was reported that when cinema staff spoke to users some were not always keen on using the current lift, which meant having to go around the back of the building via a shared access road. Entering the building from the back was not a good customer experience. The proposed platform/ chairlift would mean users coming in through the same entrance as most of the other people coming to the cinema. It was reported that when the platform/ chairlift was in operation it was usually the preferred lift for users over the passenger lift at the back. Installation of this proposed lift would mean that there were two ways to access the Abbey Hall via a lift rather than one.

Members considered that a platform/ chairlift should be installed between the Abbey Hall entrance foyer and the Abbey Hall/ cinema, pending a more comprehensive long-term solution to the access issues affecting the building.

Members felt that advice on options for improved access should be sought so that options were available for consideration by 31st March 2020. Any decision on access would have to be considered alongside the priorities which would be set following receipt of condition maintenance surveys later in the year.

Resolved:

1. That further quotes be obtained by the Town Clerk in relation to the installation of a platform/ chair lift and that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to procure the lift from the Abbey Hall property/ maintenance budget, the estimate as set out in the confidential report of the Town Clerk.
2. The Council seek further professional advice with a view to examining the options and feasibility to obtain improved physical access to the Abbey Hall/ cinema and the Guildhall. Authority to commission the appropriate advice to be delegated to the Town Clerk from the property/ maintenance budget for the Abbey Hall/ cinema and the Guildhall.

Mr and Mrs Wiper left the meeting at this point.

Water fountain

It was reported previously the plans for the water fountain in Roysse Court had previously been approved but unfortunately there had been a significant delay by OG Stonemasonry of Oxford in relation to the stone materials. However work

to install the water fountain would commence week commencing Monday 30th September and will take approximately three weeks.

It was **resolved** to register the water fountain on the “Refill App.” following the installation of the water fountain.

Audio-visual equipment

It was reported that the Council had obtained three quotes in relation to the above. Matters had taken longer than originally anticipated, due in part to the need to seek clarification on some items within the quotes. The Abbey Cinema had requested an additional fourth quote, which had now been received.

The quotes needed to be analysed and it was noted that authority was delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Guildhall Committee and the Mayor to select the equipment supplier and place the order. The intention was the equipment be installed by the end of October 2019.

Condition and maintenance surveys

It was previously reported that whilst the Council had undertaken significant works, these had been limited in scope and there was now a need to inspect the whole of the buildings, both internally and externally, setting out the principal issues and producing a costed plan and maintenance report. This would identify the priorities for ongoing development, maintenance and repair and assist with budgeting for future years. These reports were anticipated mid-October 2019.

A member stated that there were a number of building related works which potentially could be resolved by the works team during the winter months.

Resolved: Cllr Charlie Birks to meet with the works team supervisor to identify works which could be dealt with in-house and then these works be undertaken, prioritised according to urgency, by 31st March 2020.

Muniment Room

It was reported that the muniment room had been built and had been in the process of “drying out.” Earlier in 2019 humidity in the room was approximately 80%. Dehumidifiers were used for a number of months to bring this figure down and at points the humidity dropped below 50%. However during the past few months the dehumifiers had not been used. The latest humidity readings from the room were relatively stable at 69%, this was too high; humidity needed to be between 55 and 60%.

Temperatures had been satisfactory.

It was originally hoped that the muniment room might not require environmental control by way of a dehumidifier. This was not due to the cost of such equipment but a desire to avoid unnecessary electrical services. However following the environmental monitoring of the room, Mark Stevens (Berkshire County Archivist), Jackie Smith (Abingdon Archivist) and the Town Clerk had agreed that environmental control by way of a combined humidifier and dehumidifier was required. The combined humidifier and dehumidifier which had been identified by Mark Stevens as appropriate was a Hanwell CCR30. Mr Stevens advised that his view was that unless the Council needed to get additional quotes, he would choose this equipment, the cost of which was likely to be less than £5,000. The Town Clerk reported that that whilst the Council could obtain quotes the Council's Financial Regulations did not require quotes to be obtained for expenditure of less than £5,000.

A Member stated that, notwithstanding the above, the equipment should be reviewed to ensure that it was also economic in relation to lifetime costs, in terms of energy and maintenance costs.

Quotes had been obtained for the shelving and map chest for the room.

It was reported that the budget for the fit-out of the Muniment Room was £10,000. Taking into account costs as now known, the Town Clerk suggested that an additional £3,000 be made available.

The council aimed to move the archives into the Muniment Room in the first quarter of 2020.

Recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

That an additional £3,000 towards the Muniment Room fit out be funded from the Pooled Property Improvements Budget Additional budget of £3000.

Subject to release of the budget detailed above it was then **resolved**:

- 1 That subject to the details outlined in the Confidential Report of the Town Clerk and obtaining a third quote (i) that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Guildhall Committee, the Berkshire County Archivist and the Abingdon Town Archivist, to accept a quote and procure work in relation to the fit out of shelving and installation of map chest in the Muniment Room and (ii) that authority be delegated as in (i) above, to accept a quote which is not the lowest quote if this is the one which is preferred on grounds of design or quality.
- 2 That the Council install a combined humidifier and dehumidifier the selection of which was delegated to the Town Clerk with the instruction that as well as being suitable for the Muniment Room the equipment selected should

also be economic in relation to lifetime costs, in terms of energy and maintenance costs.

- 3 The target date for completion of the above to be 31st January 2020.

Treasures cabinet

Members were reminded that the council treasures were displayed at the Museum, having been temporarily moved from the Guildhall. It was planned they be moved back to a treasures cabinet in the Guildhall. The new cabinet would be designed so that it was effectively a separate secure unit held within the current space and behind the 1960s fascia, which would be retained.

The intention would be for the cabinet to be large enough to accommodate the treasures which were currently in the far room of the attic gallery. However, as was previously the case, not all the treasures could be accommodated in the cabinet and so some would remain in the Museum.

Members felt confirmed their view that most of the treasures should be moved back to the Guildhall as it would release space in the Museum for temporary exhibitions and currently not everyone could view the treasures as they were on the attic floor of the Museum. Members requested that items which had a specific civic connection, such as the Great Mace, should be displayed in the Roysse Room, with an improved display and item descriptions. They asked that possible rotation of items between the two sites be considered.

Members considered that dividing the collection between two sites was good from a security viewpoint.

It was noted that the Assistant Town Clerk Steve Rich, the Council's Collections Officer Elin Bornemann and the archivist Jackie Smith, to work on matters and bring forward proposals.

It was **resolved** that an initial scoping meeting be called to consider with officers the design and commissioning of work. Cllr. Charlie Birks, Cllr. Grace Clifton Cllr. Margaret Crick and Cllr. Jim Halliday volunteered to be part of this Group.

It was **recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee** that the Council proceed with the replacement of the treasures cabinet in the Roysse Room and that this be funded from the property improvement budget (£17,784) and the earmarked reserves in relation to civic treasures (£20,866), release of the latter requiring Council approval.

It was **recommended to Full Council** through the Finance and General Purposes Committee that £17,784 be released from the Civic Treasures earmarked reserve (emr 334) to part fund the replacement treasures cabinet.

Car Park

After discussions it was **recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee** that the following be funded from the Pooled Property Improvements Budget:

Bicycle parking, bins store and any emergency car park patching which becomes necessary between now and the end of the financial year – to be accommodated within a budget of £10,000.

G34 Environmental implications

The officers were requested to check that the external Abbey Hall flood lights were on daylight sensors.

G35 Publicity

Members requested the following be included in council publicity;

1. The drinking fountain when installed.
2. Bicycle storage when installed.
3. Guildhall usage figures, in consultation with Mr and Mrs Wiper.

G36 Dates of meetings

The calendar of meetings for the remainder of the Council year, was noted as follows:

- Thursday 5th December, in the Old Magistrates' Court;
- Thursday 5th March 2020, in the Old Magistrates' Court.

G37 Exclusion of the public, including the press

Resolved

That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

G38 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee**

Members received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 19th August 2019.

Resolved: that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee of 19th August 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

G39 **Guildhall Complex of buildings – property matters**

Members received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk in relation to the Guildhall Complex of buildings – property matters.

Resolved: that the confidential report of the Town Clerk in relation to the Guildhall Complex of buildings – property matters be approved.

Lightning protection

It was **resolved:**

1. That the risk assessment and design for the lightning protection works in relation to the Guildhall, be approved.
2. To obtain from Vector Design an explanation of the likely impact of a lightning strike on the building.
3. That three quotes are obtained for lightning protection works and that authority to approve the tender list be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairs of the Finance and General Purposes and the Guildhall Committees;
4. That tenders be obtained for the Council by Leys Longden Surveyors and the matter then reviewed by this Committee.

Part B: Abbey Hall

The recommendation is detailed under the confidential appendix to the Finance and General Purpose Committee of 18th September 2019.

The meeting rose at 9.20 pm.

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Minutes of the Green Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 17th September 2019 at 7.00 pm in the Bear Room, the Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames

Present:

Cllr Eric de la Harpe - Chair
Cllr Gabby Barody - Vice Chair
Cllr Andrew Coveney
Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom

In Attendance:

Cllr Margaret Crick
Cllr Alex Greenaway
H. John Killick
Phil Coker
Richard Riggs
Anne Smart Abingdon Cuts Plastic
Tim Badcock Works Team Supervisor
Louise Brown Administrative Assistant (Clerk to the meeting)
Nigel Warner Town Clerk

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Samantha Bowring, Chair of F & G P Committee/
Leader of the Council (Ex-officio)

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Eric de la Harpe declared an interest as a member of the climate change
Committee at the Vale of White Horse District Council.

3 Minutes

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 6th August
2019.

Cllr Alex Greenaway had requested a slight amendment to clarify a point he had made.
The argument he had put forward was that currently the national infrastructure does
not generate all of its electricity in carbon neutral ways (and CO2 capture is not
currently being implemented), and that there are currently no carbon neutral ways to

consume gas, beyond offsetting (which has variable costs associated). He was specifically arguing against the removal of the term "... carbon neutral as possible", but was concerned the minutes currently read as though he did not believe carbon neutrality is possible at all, when in reality he was concerned about binding the council to targets which may have undetermined costs associated with them.

The Town Clerk suggested that the minutes be amended to read:

"Cllr Alex Greenaway considered that that phrase "as carbon neutral as possible" should be retained. He stated that currently the national infrastructure does not generate all of its electricity in carbon neutral ways (and CO2 capture is not currently being implemented) and that there are currently no carbon neutral ways to consume gas, beyond offsetting (which had variable costs associated). He was concerned about binding the Council to targets which may have undetermined costs associated with them."

The Committee agreed this was a true reflection of Cllr Greenaway's contribution and it was **resolved** that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting of the Green Scrutiny Committee held on 6th August 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising

None.

5 Public Participation

The Chair introduced four members of the public: Anne Smart from Abingdon Cuts Plastic, H. John Killick, Phil Coker, and Richard Riggs. They all had qualifications and expert knowledge on topics covered by the committee.

The members of the public explained they were there to assist with the technical terminology and to answer any questions the Committee may have. The Committee agreed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow them to speak and participate in the meeting, noting that the Committee was of an advisory and scrutiny nature rather than one with delegated financial powers.

6 Terms of Reference

The Committee discussed two proposed amendments to the terms of reference.

- That the Committee increase from 7 members to 10 members.
- That the Committee change its name from 'Green Scrutiny Committee' to 'Green Advisory and Scrutiny Committee.'

It was **recommended to the Town Council** that both these amendments be approved.

7 The Work of the Committee

The Committee discussed and approved a proposal to divide committee work into categories and nominated a member to take the lead on each one:

- a. CO2 & NOx – Cllr Alex Greenaway
- b. Bikes & Buses – Cllr Andrew Coveney
- c. Bees & Trees – Cllr Alex Greenaway
- d. Bags and Plastic – Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom
- e. Waste & Recycling – Cllr Alex Greenaway
- f. Town Planning – Cllr Samantha Bowring, subject to her agreement

Cllr Alex Greenaway confirmed that he was content to initially take on three categories allocated to him above, as his work background gave him a knowledge of ‘CO” & NOx’ and ‘Waste & Recycling’. However ideally he would like to only take the lead on ‘Bees and trees’ when other volunteers became available to take on the other two. He also indicated his willingness to serve as a member of the Committee if it is enlarged.

The members asked H. John Killick, Phil Coker, and Richard Riggs if they felt, with their knowledge and expertise, if the goal to be “Carbon Neutral by 2030 subject to the ability to offset emissions” was realistic.

They felt that as long as the goal included the sentence ‘subject to the ability to offset emissions; then it was achievable. They also highlighted that this will inevitably involve a cost that the council would need to consider. It was also considered that if the goal was for Abingdon Town Council to be carbon neutral then that was possible, but that if we were opening that goal up to the whole of Abingdon then it might be a harder goal to reach.

There was a discussion around the major challenge being usage of gas fuel and the three main buildings of the council: the Abbey Hall/ Guildhall, the Roysse court offices and the Museum. The Town Clerk reminded the group that in relation to the Abbey Hall the previous council policy had been to allow a temporary two-year use as a cinema before planned major works to create a community hub with the County and District Councils. Consequently most of the work which had been carried out in the last year in relation to the Abbey Hall was to make improvements to allow the building to be used for a two-year period, with major works held off to a future date in the context of external funding being used for the hub. Very little work had been done in relation to energy efficiency. The boilers were dated and the Abbey Hall roof, which was likely to need replacement at a point in the future, had minimal insulation.

The Town Clerk also reported that with regard to the Guildhall whilst the Council has undertaken significant works, these have been limited and the Council has commissioned inspections of the whole of the buildings, both internally and externally, setting out the principal issues and producing a costed plan and maintenance report. This would identify the priorities for ongoing development, maintenance and repair and assist with budgeting for future years. A steer was being given to the surveyors that

the Council's policy was (subject to agreement at the September 2019 meeting) to be "Carbon Neutral by 2030 subject to the ability to offset emissions." It may be that further specialist advice might be required in this regard.

H. John Killick, Phil Coker, and Richard Riggs felt that if you were declaring a climate emergency then really you need to change from gas and therefore the gas boilers would need replacing. However it might be difficult to make a financial case for this at present. Members asked them about carbon permits and if the council explore these. They stated that this is scheme that applies to much bigger organisations and did not apply to the Town Council.

8 SMART objectives

Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom circulated a paper and explained to the committee SMART objective setting and provided some examples. The paper is attached as Appendix 1. The Committee would be requested to look at short-term and long-term objectives. Timewise there were various definitions but Cllr Rowbottom suggested short-term as up to 12 months and long-term as being more than 12 months.

9 Workshop Session

The Committee then had a "break out session" in two groups, to collate ideas and feed back to the full committee. The aim of the break out session was to come up with a short term and a long-term SMART objective to feed back to the committee.

The two topics and feedback received for each were as follows:

Climate Change (CO₂ & NO_x)

- The short-term goal could be to improve heating efficiency by ensuring that staff adjusted radiators in the Guildhall e.g. by switching down when rooms are not in use, subject to care being taken to keep the rooms at a sufficient temperature for the works of art. It was necessary in this regard to "win Hearts and Minds" so that staff would feel motivated to do this. The Council could also potentially change thermostats and install a smart meter.
- Keep an eye on when the energy supply contract is due for renewal and propose that going forward we only buy from suppliers that provide renewable energy and offset gas. Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom stated that she was already advising on procurement and the Council had started to use a consortium to obtain more competitive prices in various areas.
- Also consider the overall replacement of the heating system following the M and E study.

Bikes and Buses

- To investigate the number of bike racks in Abingdon by next meeting with a view to then setting a target to increase spaces.

- Anne Smart volunteered to produce a map with the number of bike racks and where in Abingdon town centre and bring it to the next meeting. To also then investigate the unused and locked up racks by the Old Abbey Hall.

The committee decided to defer consideration of the other categories to a future meeting to allow them the time they deserved.

The two topics to be discussed next meeting would be 'Bees and Trees' and 'Plastics'.

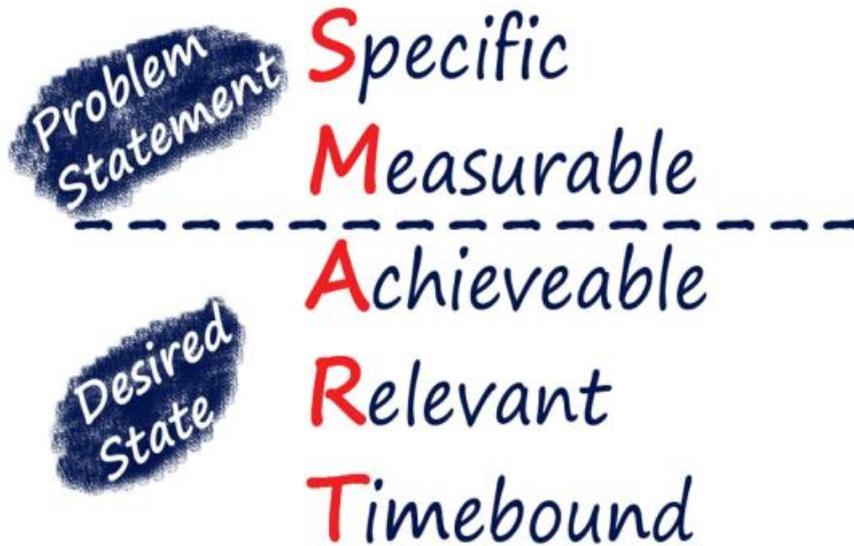
10 Calendar of meetings for the year

The committee agreed a schedule of meetings for the year as follows:

Monday 21st October 2019
Tuesday 3rd December 2019
Tuesday 7th January 2020
Thursday 13th February 2020
Tuesday 31st March 2020

The meeting rose at 8.41pm.

SMART Objective Setting



| | |
|----------|--|
| S | • Specific: State exactly what you want to accomplish (Who, What, Where, Why) |
| M | • Measurable: How will you demonstrate and evaluate the extent to which the goal has been met? |
| A | • Achievable: stretch and challenging goals within ability to achieve outcome. What is the action-oriented verb? |
| R | • Relevant: How does the goal tie into your key responsibilities? How is it aligned to objectives? |
| T | • Time-bound: Set 1 or more target dates, the “by when” to guide your goal to successful and timely completion (include deadlines, dates and frequency) |

Good Examples

1. To improve xx procedures by reducing waste to x% through a consultative approach with staff and implementing new changes by [date].
2. To increase the accuracy of instrumentation data related to [named] by x% by [date]. To up date the Health & Safety policy document for building x and ensure all staff within the building are advised of changes by [date].
3. Co-write a proposal to [named] funding body as Co-I and support [name] as lead PI in the response to call for [named specialism] with submission deadline [date] with a total value University of xxx contribution of £xm.



Useful tips:

Who, What, Why, When, Where, How, How Much?

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Draft Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting
held on Wednesday 18th September 2019 at 7:00pm
in the Bear Room, Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames.

Present

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Cllr Samantha Bowring | Chair |
| Cllr Jim Halliday | Vice-Chair and Chair of Amenities & Recreation Committee |
| Cllr Gabby Barody | |
| Cllr Charlie Birks | Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames (ex-officio) |
| Cllr Margaret Crick | Chair of Guildhall Committee |
| Cllr Eric de la Harpe | |
| Cllr Neil Fawcett | Chair of Community Services Committee |
| Cllr Andy Foulsham | |
| Cllr Jeanette Halliday | Chair of Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee |
| Cllr Patrick Lonergan | Chair of County Hall Museum Management Committee |
| Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom | |

In Attendance

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Mr Nigel Warner | Town Clerk |
| Mrs Susan Whipp | Treasurer/Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk to the meeting) |

One member of the public – Rita Atkinson, Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

F18 **Apologies**

There were no apologies.

F19 **Declarations of interest**

Cllr Jim Halliday declared an interest in relation to lack of fibre connectivity as he is a local resident in the area affected. See minute F24.

F20 **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18th June 2019.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18th June 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F21 **Statements and Questions from the public**

The meeting was attended by Rita Atkinson, Trustee of The Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project who spoke in support of the grant application being considered under agenda item 5.

[The Town Clerk entered the meeting, the time being 7:09pm].

F22 **Matter referred**

Community Services Committee Meeting 20th August 2019

The committee considered a grant application from The Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project. The amount applied for was £5,000. This had previously been considered by the Community Services Committee who had resolved to award a grant of £1,000 from its budget and recommended to Finance and General Purposes Committee that the remaining amount applied for be funded from the Community Fund.

It was proposed by Cllr Fawcett, seconded by Cllr Lonergan and **resolved that** an additional grant of £4,000 be awarded from the Community Fund.

Guildhall Committee Meeting 16th September 2019

The committee received and considered a request from the Guildhall Committee for expenditure to be funded from the central Pooled Property Improvements Budget (499/4864). The committee were also requested to consider the use of the civic treasures earmarked reserve to part fund the replacement of the current treasure's cabinet.

It was **resolved that**:

- (i) £3,000 from the Pooled Property Improvements Fund be used towards the Muniment Room fit out due to the additional costs required to install a combined humidifier and dehumidifier.
- (ii) £10,000 from the Pooled Property Improvements Fund be used for the provision of bicycle parking, bin stores and emergency car park patching.
- (iii) £17,784 from the Pooled Property Improvements Fund be used for the improvements to the treasures cabinet in the Roysse Room, subject also to the recommendation below.

It was **RECOMMENDED to Full Council** that:

£20,866 be released from the Civic Treasures earmarked reserve (emr 334) to part fund the replacement treasures cabinet.

[The meeting then adjourned, the time being 7:34pm and reconvened at 7:43pm].

F23 **Bus Services Working Group**

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. Cllr Jim Halliday commented that there had been two meetings, both of which were attended by different members of the working group. It was agreed that the timing of future meetings would be considered in order to allow the same members to attend, thus providing better continuity of discussions.

Cllr Neil Fawcett asked whether the working group is looking at potential changes to the service in the future, rather than any immediate changes. Cllr Samantha Bowring confirmed that the current arrangements are based on a rolling contract, with a three-month notice period required for any changes. This allows the Council time then to investigate longer-term solutions to improve local bus services.

Members noted the report.

F24 **IT Working Group**

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk confirmed that he has received quotes for the installation of a leased line and agreed to circulate these to members of the working group prior to the next working group meeting (time to be agreed). It was acknowledged that the original task of the working group to consider the procurement of tablets had been superseded by other matters for now. Cllr Bowring asked the working group to research options for tablets as soon as possible, notwithstanding the other IT matters the group is considering.

The committee discussed the Community Fibre Partnership (CFP) as an option to expediate fibre installation in the town centre. This would involve joint working with other groups and organisations in the local area. Cllr Jim Halliday declared a personal interest in this matter as a resident in the area. Cllr Andy Foulsham commented that the CFP should be looked at in order to assist local residents and businesses but he had concerns whether such an arrangement would be sufficient for the business needs of the Guildhall complex. It was agreed that the Council would continue lobbying on behalf of local residents, while also pursuing a solution for the Council. Cllr Bowring asked members to consider how they could best work with the community and bring any ideas to the next meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee.

F25 **Financial Report**

Members received and considered the report of the Treasurer / RFO. The Treasurer updated members on the new payment arrangements which have been put in place since the last meeting. Regarding the payment made for the quarterly part-funding of the PCSO, Cllr Jeanette Halliday commented that previously, members received a formal annual report from the PCSOs but this was no longer the case. The Town Clerk agreed to request such a report. It was also noted that a Neighbourhood Policing report was already received in relation to the whole town and it was agreed, subject to Police consent, that this

should be posted onto the Town's website. He confirmed that PCSO Ali Blood would be attending the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

Regarding the actions raised at the recent Strategy Day, Cllr Neil Fawcett asked why the work to identify the fixed and variable elements of the budget was not included in this report. The Treasurer responded that she had discussed this with both the Town Clerk and the Leader of the Council, and it had been agreed that at this stage of strategy setting such a report would be premature. She explained that in the longer term the majority of the Council's costs could be treated as variable / optional as the Council is bound by very few duties. Members agreed that the priority should be to agree the Council's strategy which would then inform the budget. In the meantime, it was agreed that members and staff would consider any efficiency savings which could be identified within the current budget. This would then be reported back to the next meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Cllr Gabby Barody asked how the Council considers investing its funds. The Treasurer replied that at present the funds are within business savings accounts which offer immediate access. It was agreed that the Town Clerk and Treasurer would investigate alternatives and bring a report back to the next meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Members then considered the proposal to allocate overhead central services' staff time to services. Cllr Bowring explained the reason for this would be to understand the full cost of running each service. The committee considered the pros and cons of introducing such a system and voted (9 for, 2 abstentions) to trial it for six months.

It was **resolved that**:

- (i) The payments listings for 1st June 2019 and 31st August 2019 be approved;
- (ii) The management accounts, for this committee and for the full Council, for the period up to 31st July 2019 be approved;
- (iii) Members and staff be requested to identify any efficiency savings within the current budget;
- (iv) Officers are to trial a system of allocating central service's staff time from October 2019, and bring an interim report to the next meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee.

F26 **Brexit**

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. It was agreed that the suggestions contained within the report were appropriate. There was further discussion regarding staffing matters, water supplies and the town's role should major problems arise. Cllr Bowring requested that members send any other suggestions to the Town Clerk. Matters would be reviewed by the Leader and the Town Clerk as events unfolded over the coming months.

Members noted the report.

It was **resolved**, further to the report, that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to offer support and assistance to staff members from EU nations who were applying for settled status, as was appropriate.

F27 **Council Strategy Day**

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. Cllr Bowring confirmed that a special meeting of the Council was to be arranged, at which the Strategy and priorities of the Council would be approved. Cllr Fawcett asked what the format of this meeting would be. Cllr Bowring replied that there would be a Group meeting prior to this, at which an outline proposal for the Strategy and priorities would be drafted. This would then be considered formally at the Council meeting.

It was **resolved** that the date for the special meeting of the Council was Monday 18th November 2019 at 7pm.

F28 **Financial Regulations**

Members received and considered the report of the Treasurer / RFO. The report contained a proposed updated version of the Financial Regulations which took into account changes within the NALC model financial regulations and the specific arrangements of this Council.

It was commented that the draft regulations do not include any reference to environmental matters and it was suggested that this could be included within section 9.4 (procurement of goods and services). Cllr Pat Lonergan suggested that instead of changing every Council document to reflect environmental issues, the Council could adopt an overall policy on green / environment issues which could then overlay all documents.

It was proposed by Cllr Jim Halliday, seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring and approved that it be **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council:

That the draft updated Financial Regulations be approved.

F29 **Council Core documents**

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. The Committee reviewed the core council documents which had been circulated. Regarding the Council and Committee Terms of Reference, the Town Clerk suggested that the appointment of co-opted members to sub-committees should only require approval by the parent committee and not also approval by full council. This would then be in line with the co-option rules for committees which do not require full council approval. Members concurred this seemed a sensible approach. No other amendments within any of the documents attached to the report were suggested by members.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the Council's core documents be approved for continued use, subject to the amendments listed below:

- (i) Member Code of Conduct
- (ii) Standing Orders
- (iii) Council Terms of Reference – subject to amending:
 - (a) *“Co-option of members to Sub-Committees requires the approval of the parent committee, which will then make a recommendation to the Council for final approval”*
To:
“Co-option of members to Sub-Committees requires the approval of the parent committee”
 - (b) changes to reflect the establishment of the Green Scrutiny Committee;
- (iv) Council privacy policy
- (v) Code of Practice in relation to public speaking at Council meetings
- (vi) Privacy Policy
- (vii) General privacy notice for residents and members of the public
- (viii) General privacy notice for staff, councillors and role holders
- (ix) Subject access requests policy
- (x) Code of practice for handling complaints
- (xi) Flag policy in relation to the County Hall

F30 **Community Infrastructure Levy**

Members received and considered the report of the Treasurer / RFO. Cllr Neil Fawcett asked whether the District Council would be paying interest to the Town Council if they retained the funds on behalf of the Town Council. The Town Clerk replied that such an arrangement had not been included in the letter from the District Council and it was agreed this would be investigated prior to the committee making a decision on which body would hold the funds. Cllr Jim Halliday asked for a report at budget setting time which included the date the monies were each received, in order to establish the time left in which the monies were required to be spent.

The Town Clerk updated members on the approach from The Friends of Abingdon Buildings Trust and explained that the Trust required the financial support of both the town and district council support in order to for their proposed project in order to for their NLHF bid to progress. Their timescale for this was by December 2019. The District Council document also stated that the Council should consult with the local community.

It was agreed that the report of the Treasurer / RFO would be reconsidered at the next Full Council meeting.

F31 **Environmental implications**

Members considered the environmental implications in relation to matters on the agenda. Use of electric / hybrid vehicles had previously been discussed. Cllr Samantha Bowring reminded members that the technology in relation to electric vehicles did not, as yet, extend to the type of vehicles required by the Council. It was also noted that the most environmentally friendly option at the present is to retain the current vehicles rather than replace, as the latter had a major environmental impact in relation to the manufacture of vehicles.

No other environmental implications were identified.

F32 **Publicity**

Members considered publicity matters. Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom suggested the declaration of a Climate Emergency in Abingdon should be more widely publicised. This was discussed in some detail and members agreed that the Council should publicise events and activities of the Council which will go some way to mitigate the climate emergency as these events and activities arise.

F33 **Dates of meetings**

The committee noted the dates of future meetings:

14th January 2020 (budget)
21st January 2020
17th March 2020
16th June 2020

SECTION II (Confidential)

F34 **Confidential Report of the Town Clerk**

The committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk.

Matters referred

Amenities and Recreation Committee Meeting 4th September 2019

It was noted that a New Cemetery Working Group had been established, comprising of Cllrs Eric de la Harpe, Jeanette Halliday and Jim Halliday. It was agreed that the matter of membership should also be placed on the Town Council agenda to see if any other members were interested in serving on the group.

After some discussion, the committee agreed the **recommendations to Full Council** contained within the report. *See the confidential appendix to these minutes.*

Guildhall Committee Meeting 16th September 2019

The committee considered property matters and agreed **recommendations to Full Council**. *See the confidential appendix to these minutes.*

Bus Services Working Group

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk together with the notes of the working group meetings of 12th July and 15th August 2019. *See the confidential appendix to these minutes.*

IT Working Group

The committee considered recommendations relating to the report “IT Infrastructure Road Map and Planning” from the Council’s IT support company.

It was **resolved that**:

- (i) The Council replace the servers at Roysse Court;
- (ii) Microsoft Office 365 with Vipre Email security be installed;
- (iii) Authority be delegated to the IT Working Group to progress matters in accordance with the IT Infrastructure Road Map and Planning document (18th June 2019) and that budget for this work be drawn from the computer equipment budget (£10,000) and the remainder from the pooled equipment budget.

Property Matters – Roysse Court

The committee considered the report of the Town Clerk. It was agreed that a further report be presented to the special meeting of the Council, provisionally to be held on 18th November 2019 outlining all the options for the future location of the Information Office.

Fairs

The committee considered the report of the Town Clerk. *See confidential appendix to these minutes.*

Residents’ Parking Scheme

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk and made **RECOMMENDATIONS** to Full Council. *See confidential appendix to these minutes.*

It was **resolved** that the Town Clerk request an update from the District Council in relation to progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), stressing to them that the Council was keen for progress to be made in this regard and also requesting an updated timescale in relation to this matter.

It was noted that the matter of CPE had been under discussion by the County and District Councils for some years but that the Town Council had no control over the timescales in this regard.

The meeting rose at 10:33pm.